

But overall I voted against the package. Since the Committee was set up, outside groups have generally been able to file charges against Members if they believe there is good evidence of possible misconduct that should be investigated. Some important cases have been brought before the Standards Committee in this way, including the charges against Speaker Gingrich that resulted in his being reprimanded by the full House and paying a \$300,000 penalty.

Under the new Committee rules, however, people outside Congress can no longer file complaints with the Committee, even if they have personal and direct knowledge of egregious conduct by a Member. Now only a Member of the House could file charges against another Member. I believe the new rules make it even harder to hold Members accountable for serious misconduct. By this action the House does further damage to the integrity of the institution.

#### INVOLVING OUTSIDERS IN INVESTIGATIONS

I was also disappointed that the reform package failed to include a bipartisan proposal that I had introduced to involve outsiders in the investigation of charges against Members.

Under my proposal, the Speaker and the Minority Leader would jointly appoint a pool of "independent fact-finders" to be called upon by the Standards Committee to help in ethics investigations as needed, on a case-by-case basis. These individuals would be private citizens, and might include, for example, retired judges, former members, or just ordinary citizens. The findings and recommendations of these independent fact-finders would be reported back to the full Committee, which then makes recommendations to the full House. The basic idea is to restore credibility to the process by involving outsiders at a key point in the consideration of the charges against a Member—investigating the evidence and making recommendations on possible discipline—with the final judgment on the case still resting with the full House, as it must under the Constitution.

Our current process has simply lost too much credibility with the public and the media. There have always been inherent conflicts of interest when Members judge fellow Members—either to protect a friend or Member of the same party or to go after an opponent for political purposes. But in recent years those tensions have come to the forefront, as the ethics process has become highly partisan, bitter, and contentious.

Various other professions are increasingly calling on outsiders to help them police their membership—to reduce the tensions, stalling, and conflicts of interest. Several state legislatures, for example, are now successfully using independent ethics panels to help consider charges of misconduct against legislators. The House should do the same.

However, the House leadership opposed the idea of allowing outsiders to help investigate Member misconduct—perhaps fearing a loss of control over the disciplinary process—and it was not allowed to be considered by Members on the floor.

#### CONCLUSION

The unfortunate fact is that the House usually moves to reform its ethics process only after a major ethics scandal or a widely perceived failure of the system. The major problems we experienced with the Gingrich case gave us a rare opportunity to make some serious reforms that go to the heart of our difficulties in policing ourselves and, in turn, help restore credibility to the institution of the Congress. We should have passed more meaningful reforms.

Although we were not successful this time in including outsiders in the process, I be-

lieve that House movement in that direction is almost inevitable. I agree fully with the new Chairman of the Standards Committee, who said that next time the "use of non-House Members will be a fait accompli". Involving outsiders in the ethics process is not a panacea, but it is a significant step in the right direction. It means more openness in the spirit of good government, and it reflects confidence within the House that it is able to withstand the scrutiny.

#### IN HONOR OF ALOYSIUS HEPP

#### HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 8, 1997*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Dr. Aloysius Hepp, recipient of NASA's Exceptional Achievement Medal. Dr. Hepp, a senior materials scientist at Cleveland's NASA Lewis Research Center, received the Exceptional Achievement Medal for his significant support of the socioeconomic business programs in the small business, technical, and procurement arenas.

Dr. Hepp graduated from Carnegie Mellon University as the top chemistry major in his class. After earning a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Hepp spent a year with NASA Lewis before moving onto stints with the Center for Naval Analyses and the Polaroid Corp. Dr. Hepp returned to NASA Lewis in 1987 to continue his accomplished career. In fact, 5 out of the last 7 years, NASA Lewis honored Dr. Hepp by awarding him the Research Achievement Award. In addition to his position with NASA Lewis, Dr. Hepp serves as an adjunct professor at the State University of New York-Albany and Cleveland State University. Dr. Hepp also spent a year as a visiting scholar at Harvard University.

Dr. Hepp has played an active role in promoting diversity at NASA Lewis and increasing opportunity for minorities in education and business. For example, Dr. Hepp works with a NASA Lewis program to provide high school and college minority students with summer internships. Over the years, these internships have provided a valuable experience to many of Cleveland's youth. In many cases, these students have collaborated with scientists to produce presentations and publications.

The work done by Dr. Hepp is yet another example of the excellent work done by the scientist, engineers, and administrative personnel at the NASA Lewis Research Center. My fellow colleagues, please join me in recognizing the contributions made by Dr. Aloysius Hepp to the scientific community and the community of Cleveland in general.

#### HONORING KATHY WALLACE OF BELLAIRE, OH

#### HON. ROBERT W. NEY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 8, 1997*

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, I commend the following to my colleagues.

Kathy Wallace, of Bellaire, OH, has been named the Ohio Valley Medical Center's 1997

Ree Cook-Reiter Women's Center Woman of the Year. Kathy is the first recipient of the award which honors women who are devoted to helping their communities.

Kathy is special to many people in the Ohio Valley whose lives she has touched through her caring and giving attitude. Some of those people are residents of the Country Club Retirement Center in Bellaire where she gives weekly manicures. She always has a warm smile and friendly conversation for them. Kathy also donates sweet treats to nursing home residents from the Dairy Queen she owns in Martins Ferry, OH.

Kathy has taught Bellaire and Belmont County about the importance of volunteering and dedication to one's community. She leads by example. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues join me in thanking Kathy Wallace for her service to Belmont County, and to congratulate her as she is honored as the first recipient of the 1997 Ree Cook-Reiter Women's Center Woman of the Year. I wish Kathy Wallace continued success, health and prosperity.

#### TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SYMBOLICALLY POST-RATIFIES CONSTITUTION'S 15TH AMENDMENT

#### HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, October 8, 1997*

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, the recently concluded 1997 regular session of the 100th Tennessee General Assembly took a very historic and symbolic action. On April 2, 1997, both the Tennessee House of Representatives and the Tennessee Senate adopted House Joint Resolution 32, "to post-ratify Amendment 15 to the Constitution of the United States of America guaranteeing the right of citizens to vote regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude". On April 8, 1997, the Governor of Tennessee officially signed House Joint Resolution 32.

Mr. Speaker, the Federal Constitution's 15th amendment is a fundamental legacy from the Reconstruction period following the Civil War. While the 13th amendment abolished slavery in 1865, and the 14th amendment defined citizenship by 1868, it was not until the 15th amendment came along in 1870 that the right to cast a vote was extended to African-American males uniformly in all regions of the Nation. Of course, the 19th amendment, ratified in 1920, further extended ballot access to females of all ethnic backgrounds.

Mr. Speaker, up until just this year, Tennessee was the only State—which had been in the Union both well before the 15th amendment was proposed and long after it had gained ratification in 1870—to have never gone on record, albeit symbolically, in support of this vital section of our Nation's highest legal document. As a matter of fact, a resolution specifically denouncing the 15th amendment was adopted by the 36th Tennessee General Assembly in 1870 and that resolution of rejection had remained Tennessee's only official pronouncement on the matter for the ensuing 127 years. But this embarrassing chapter of history was duly remedied when House Joint Resolution 32 was presented last spring in the Tennessee House of Representatives by the Honorable Tommie F. Brown of